

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05
PC-01 IO-13 /075 W
-----171858Z 068495 /43

R 171254Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 633
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: RUMORS CONTINUE TO BUZZ ON ELCTIONS THIS SPRING

REF: NEW DELHI 0267

1. RUMORS CONTINUE TO FLIT AROUND DELHI THAT THE PM WILL DECIDE TO HOLD SNAP ELECTIONS IN MARCH OR EVEN APRIL THIS YEAR. KULDIP NAYAR (INDIAN EXPRESS) WROTE A FRONTPAGE ARTICLE, JAN 15, ALLEGING THAT THE EMERGENCY WOULD NOT BE LIFTED FOR THE ELECTIONS AND THAT FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ELECTION DECISION MIGHT BE MADE ON THE OPENING DAY OF PARLIAMENT, FEB 9 (ACTUALLY, THIS DATE IS INCORRECT, SEE PARA 4). NAYAR SAYS THAT THE MATTER WILL BE DISCUSSED IN FURTHER DETAIL WITH THE CHIEF MINISTERS OF THE STATES WHEN THEY MEET WITH THE PM JAN. 19 FOR ONE OF THEIR PERIODIC REVIEWS OF THE NATIONAL SCENE.

2. AN AUSTRALIAN HICOMM OFFICER HEARD OVER THE WEEKEND THAT A DATE IN LATE APRIL HAS BEEN SET, WHILE THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES OF INDIA TOLD US JAN 14 THAT WHILE THERE HAD BEEN ACTIVE
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DISCUSSION OF ELECTIONS, HE UNDERSTOOD THE PM HAD CEASED DISCUSSING ELECTIONS WITH HER ADVISORS SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER AND THAT THE IMPRESSION HIS SOURCES HAD WAS THAT SHE HAD DEFINITELY DECIDED AGAINST ELECTIONS AT THIS TIME.

3. WE REPORTED LAST WEEK THE DENIALS BY TWOXF THE CLOSER CABINET ADVISORS TO THE PM, BANSI LAL AND OM MEHTA, OF ELECTIONS

BUT THE RUMOR MILL DISCOUNTS THESE AS EFFORTS TO THROW DUST IN THE EYES OF OUTSIDE OBSERVERS. THE KEY ARGUMENTS USED TO SUPPORT THE LIKELIHOOD OF ELECTIONS ARE THE STEADY RELEASE OF OPPOSITION POLITICAL LEADERS IN RECENT WEEKS, THE RELATIVELY BUOYANT STATE OF THE ECONOMY AT THIS TIME, THE HEAVY SCHEDULE OF TRAVELING (PRE-ELECTION?) BY BOTH THE PM AND SANJAY GANDHI (THE LATTER BEING REPORTED SEPTEL) IN RECENT WEEKS, AND THE FACT THAT THE PM HAS APPARENTLY DISCUSSED THE PROS-AND-CONS OF ELECTIONS WITH A NUMBER OF POLITICAL ADVISORS IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS. IN ADDITION, SOME PEOPLE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT BHUTTO'S DECISION TO HOLD PAKIS-TANI ELECTIONS IN MARCH, AND MRS. GANDHI'S INTEREST IN RE-COVERING A FAVORABLE IMAGE IN THE WEST (PARTICULARLY BEFORE A POSSIBLE VISIT TO LONDON IN JUNE FOR COMMONWEALTH PM'S MEETING AND THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE) ARE ALSO FACTORS FAVORING A POSITIVE ELECTION DECISION. AT ONE POINT, POLITICAL PUNDITS WERE SUGGESTING THAT ELECTIONS WOULD BE CALLED BEFORE PARLIAMENT WAS RECONVENED AND THAT THE "SIGNAL" WOULD BE A DELAY IN SENDING OUT NOTICES TOMPS ON THE UPCOMING SESSIN. THAT "SIGNAL" IN FACT STILL REMAINS OPEN SINCE NO NOTICE HAS YET BEEN SENT OUT TO MPS (21 DAYS IS USUAL NOTICE) FOR BUDGET SESSION OF PARLIAMENT, CONTRARY TO NAYAR'S REPORT DWSCRIBED PARA 1 ABOVE.

4. THE BUREAUCRACY, AT LEAST, IS WORKING BUSILY AWAY ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE BUDGET WILL BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT ON FEB 28 WITH THE SESSION ACTUALLY CONVENING A WEEK EARLIER. SINCE A MINIMUM OF 33 DAYS ELECTION NOTICE IS REQUIRED BY LAW (IN ORDER TO ENABLE VARIOUS CLOCKS TO RUN ON FILING AND NOTICE DATES), IF THIS BUDGET SESSION SCHEDULE IS MAINTAINED, IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO HOLD ELECTIONS UNTIL LATE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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APRIL (AS THE AUSTRALIANS HEAR), A TIME FRAME WHICH MOST POLITICIANS HAVE TOLD US IS LATE IN TERMS OF THE FARMERS' CULTIVATION AND HARVESTING SCHEDULE AND THE RISE OF THE TEMPERATURE CHARTS OVER MOST OF THE COUNTRY. OUR SKEPTICISM ON ELECTIONS REMAINS HIGH BUT WE WILL CONTINUE TO WTCH THE AUGERS AND THE PM CLOSELY IN THE DAYS AHEAD.

SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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